



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

August 9, 2007

For immediate release

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DNR ISSUES DRINKING WATER BOIL ORDER FOR CHARITON

MEDIA CONTACT: Jim Stricker at (515) 725-0270

CHARITON – The DNR issued a boil order for Chariton residents Thursday after routine water testing has shown high levels of turbidity, low chlorine residuals and elevated bacteria levels.

The 4,500 residents in the Lucas County town should boil water used for drinking or cooking, brushing teeth, food preparation or any other purpose involving human consumption. City water may still be used for bathing.

Samples collected August 5 from Chariton Municipal Water Works' water supply showed turbidity levels of greater than 1 turbidity unit, above the standard of 0.3 turbidity units. Turbidity is cloudiness caused by particles in the water and is an indication of inadequate water treatment.

The DNR is issuing the order based on these test results, as well as the Water Works' failure to conduct monitoring as directed, to accurately report operational data, and to consistently apply adequate operational strategies.

“The boil order protects the public while these issues are being resolved. That’s why we’re requiring residents to boil their water until water samples come back showing the water is safe to drink,” said Jim Stricker, the supervisor of the DNR’s Des Moines field office.

For the DNR to lift the boil order, turbidity levels must be below 0.3 turbidity units, the total chlorine residuals must be above 1.5 mg/L total in the distribution system and bacteria tests must be satisfactory.

Boiling destroys disease-causing organisms, which may be in the water. Water should be brought to a boil, boiled one minute and then allowed to cool before using. More information on disinfecting water is available on the EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791. Residents should continue to boil their water until DNR and Chariton Municipal Water Works officials notify them that water is meeting standards and is safe to drink.

Chariton’s water supply comes from two lakes located east of town. The turbidity levels have exceeded standards, and violations have been issued for June, July and August. The Chariton water supply changed its disinfection method in July and must maintain a minimum of 1.5 mg/L total chlorine residual in the distribution system. The required chlorine residual was not maintained for 15 days in July.

The DNR is proceeding with legal action against the Chariton Municipal Water Works for not meeting turbidity standards, not meeting the maximum contaminant level (MCL) for total trihalomethanes and total haloacetic acids, and other issues.

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MANURE RUNOFF REACHES CREEK IN LOUISA COUNTY FISH KILL

MEDIA CONTACT: Jim Sievers at 319-653-2135

COTTER – Manure runoff from a nearby open feedlot led to a fish kill, reported to the DNR Wednesday, in Short Creek near Cotter.

A citizen discovered several dead fish in the creek northeast of Cotter Wednesday morning. Upon investigating, DNR officials found several dead white suckers, minnows, gizzard chads, chubs and at least one largemouth bass in the affected waters.

DNR fisheries technician Vance Poulton estimated the fish kill spanned approximately three miles of Short Creek and occurred sometime over the weekend. Further details surrounding the fish kill are expected Thursday afternoon following tests.

DNR officials traced the runoff to an open feedlot located roughly a half-mile away from the creek. It appears hoses used to cool hogs led to the runoff escaping the open feedlot.

Fish require dissolved oxygen in water in order to survive, and dissolved oxygen levels decrease when pollutants such as manure runoff enter the water. Iowa's recent warm temperatures have also further stressed fish, making them vulnerable.

During summer months, it is critical open feedlot producers inspect below their lots for cut channels or other ways that manure can reach Iowa waters.

Fish kills should be reported to the DNR's 24-hour spill hotline at (515) 281-8694. The investigation is ongoing. The DNR is considering enforcement action, including restitution for dead fish.

Writer: Holly Williams

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CONSUMPTION ADVISORY FOR BASS REMOVED IN MASON CITY

MEDIA CONTACT: Cindy Garza, DNR Field Office in Mason City, at 515-424-4073.

MASON CITY — A fish consumption advisory for largemouth bass caught from Black Pit (also known as Pierce Pond) located in Lester Milligan Park in Mason City has been removed.

Removal of the advisory comes after testing of largemouth bass filets during the past year. The advisory was issued in July of 2006 after two fish tissue samplings conducted by the DNR – one in early May and a subsequent one in late June of 2006 – detected slightly elevated levels of mercury in largemouth bass fillets. The levels were 0.24 parts per million (ppm) in the May sampling and 0.23 ppm in the June sampling of fish tissue. The recent samples taken this summer were .018 parts per million.

The samples taken for both channel catfish and panfish in 2006 were below the 0.2 ppm level for mercury used to determine if an advisory was issued last year. A 0.3 standard is now used to remain consistent with standards used by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

A nearby pond in Lester Milligan Park, Big Blue, has not been impacted and there have been no advisories put into effect for fish from there.

The Iowa Department of Public Health and Iowa Department of Natural Resources urge citizens to consider the following factors regarding the consumption of fish:

- Fish is a healthy food-source of lean protein and essential fatty acids

- Fish should be a part of the healthy diet of all individuals including pregnant or nursing mothers and young children
- Environmental chemicals are present in fish tissue at low concentrations, and bio-accumulate in larger and older fish
- Exposure to larger amounts of environmental chemicals can be avoided by restricting consumption of larger-sized fresh-water predator fish (such as bass, walleye, and pike), and certain varieties of salt-water fish (such as mackerel, shark, swordfish, and tilefish)

Although the source of mercury in Black Pit is not known, in 2005 The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) inspected two buildings and the surrounding property located at 1511 S. Garfield Place and 1580 SW 15th St. where mercury oxide battery manufacturing operations were performed in the past. While the EPA is continuing its efforts to have the responsible party clean up, mercury levels in Black Pit have dropped since equipment that had mercury-laden dust on it was moved from the parking lot.

Writer: Kevin Baskins

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UPDATE: MORE THAN 90,000 FISH KILLED IN FLOYD RIVER

MEDIA CONTACT: Kevin Baskins at 515-249-2814.

HOSPERS – The DNR has estimated a fish kill in the Floyd River near Hospers to be approximately 97,000 fish.

The fish were killed along approximately 7.4 miles of stream and were valued at \$11,660. Most of the fish were smaller minnow species including shiners and chubs, but there were also dead sunfish, suckers and a few channel catfish found as well.

The DNR is continuing to investigate the incident to determine the reason for the fish kill and is currently awaiting laboratory results from water samples that have been collected. If a responsible party can be determined, restitution will be sought for the value of the fish.

The DNR first began investigating the fish kill Aug. 6.

Writer: Kevin Baskins

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2006 IOWA DRINKING WATER COMPLIANCE REPORT AVAILABLE

MEDIA CONTACT: Dennis Alt at (515) 725-0275.

DES MOINES — More than 2.63 million Iowans served by public water supplies received safe drinking water in 2006, according to an annual DNR compliance report presented to the Iowa Environmental Protection Commission Aug. 7.

Iowans can check the safety of the drinking water in their city by going online to the “Iowa Public Drinking Water Program 2006 Annual Compliance Report.” The report can be found at www.iowadnr.gov/water/drinking/reports.html and is also available by contacting the DNR.

“As people look at the report, they should understand that exceeding the maximum allowed level of contamination, or MCL, just one time for one contaminant causes a public water supply to be out of compliance,” said Dennis Alt, supervisor of the DNR’s water supply engineering section.

Alt said the results for 2006 were similar to recent years, despite new federal regulations that created more requirements for water system operators and state oversight staff.

“Overall, the public water supplies in Iowa are serving safe water and we can be proud that there have been no deaths or disease outbreaks reported,” he said. “We even saw a slight increase in the number of systems that met the drinking water standards for bacteria and nitrates throughout 2006 when compared to last year. However, we continue to have room for improvement.”

The contaminants found in Iowa which can cause an immediate, or acute, health risk are coliform bacteria from a fecal source, nitrate and nitrite. Bacteria pose a risk to people who are elderly, very young or who have weakened immune systems. Nitrate and nitrite are a risk to infants under six months of age and possibly pregnant women.

Less than one percent or 19 of the 2,015 active public water supplies in 2006 had 31 violations of the fecal coliform bacteria standard. Nineteen systems had a total of 64 violations of the nitrate standard. One system had two violations of the nitrite standard.

All public water systems are required to sample their water at specific intervals for certain contaminants. Many of those systems are also required to submit monthly operation reports. The DNR issues monitoring or reporting violations if systems do not collect the required samples or submit timely reports.

“This is another of the areas where we need to see improvement with compliance,” said Alt. “Both the number of systems with a monitoring or reporting violation increased over 2005, as did the total number of violations.

“The drinking water industry is very complicated with many requirements,” he added. Iowa is fortunate to have dedicated, qualified water treatment and water distribution system operators, and state drinking water staff. And I'm sure we can work together to improve the compliance rate.”

These are some of the report's highlights:

- There were no reported waterborne disease outbreaks or deaths from Iowa public drinking water supplies.
- All health-based standards were met by 90 percent of Iowa's 2,015 regulated public water supplies.
- More than 2.6 million people served by Iowa's public water systems received water that was in compliance with all health-based standards.
- The 396 health-based standard violations at 193 public water supplies were of these contaminants (followed by the percent contributed by each contaminant to the total number of violations): non-fecal coliform bacteria (50 percent), nitrate (16 percent), total trihalomethanes (9 percent), fecal coliform bacteria (8 percent), arsenic (4 percent), lead (4 percent), copper (4 percent), and other contaminants.
- Major monitoring and reporting requirements were met by 80 percent of Iowa's public water supply systems. Of the 1,088 violations, monitoring violations for coliform bacteria, nitrate, volatile organic compounds, and synthetic organic compounds, and reporting violations were the most prevalent.
- The requirement for each of the 1,146 community public water supply systems to compile and distribute an annual consumer confidence report to their customers was met by 96 percent of the systems.

The federal Safe Drinking Water Act requires the State of Iowa to publish an annual report of the status of its drinking water program. The report has been distributed to the DNR's Environmental Protection Commission, the Governor's Office, the Iowa Legislature and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The report is available on the DNR's Web site (www.iowadnr.gov/water/drinking/reports.html) or by contacting the Water Supply Engineering and Operations Sections, Iowa DNR, 401 SW Seventh St., Suite M, Des Moines, IA 50309-4611 or at (515) 725-0282.

Writer: Karen Grimes

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FAIRFIELD DISCHARGES WASTEWATER FOLLOWING RAINSTORMS

MEDIA CONTACT: Dennis Ostwinkle or Jim Sievers, DNR Washington field office, (319) 653-2135.

FAIRFIELD — The City of Fairfield bypassed untreated wastewater to local creeks Wednesday evening as rainstorms moved through the area.

Almost 236,000 gallons of wastewater combined with field runoff, entering Crow Creek just above the Highway 34 bypass. Another 57,000 gallons entered into an unnamed tributary of Cedar Creek just below Jefferson County Park. The city has used lime to disinfect both areas.

The City of Fairfield is currently working on upgrading its wastewater collection system.

Writer: Jessie Brown

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DNR ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

MEDIA CONTACT: Jessie Brown at (515) 281-5131.

DES MOINES — The DNR took the following enforcement actions in June and July 2007. The following are only briefs; please contact Jessie Brown of the DNR for more information at (515) 281-5131.

Enforcement actions, including copies of the original orders and contact information, are available on the DNR's Web site at www.iowadnr.gov/legal/eactions.html. The Web listing offers orders first taken in 2007 (amendments to orders issued prior to 2007 are not listed).

Administrative Orders

Responsible parties have 30 days to appeal the order or 60 days to pay the penalty.

Dickinson County

- Doug Orwig, of Lake Park, was issued a unilateral administrative order to submit a complete manure management plan (MMP) and fees, and to pay a \$3,500 penalty. The order is in regard to failure to submit a complete Iowa Phosphorus Index MMP for a site in Dickinson County.

Hamilton County

- The DNR amended a 1999 administrative order regarding animal feeding operations at a site in Hamilton County. The order is amended by deleting all references to Iowa Select Farms, L.P. as a responsible party for any of the violations addressed in the order.

Consent Orders

A consent order is issued as an alternative to issuing an administrative order. A consent order indicates that the DNR has voluntarily entered into a legally enforceable agreement with the other party.

Cerro Gordo County

- Cerro Gordo County and the City of Meservey agreed in a consent order to retain an engineer to submit a preliminary engineering report, to remove a bypass from the city's lift station wet well, to install new pumps at the lift station and to obtain permits for future construction or changes to wastewater treatment facilities. The county and city also agreed to pay a \$1,250 penalty to the DNR and perform a supplemental environmental project (SEP) with an estimated cost of \$5,800. The project will pay for improvements to leaking manholes in Meservey. The consent order is in regard to violations at the city's wastewater treatment plant.
- Doug Neuberger, of Clear Lake, agreed in a consent order to submit a manure management plan and obtain certification as a confinement site manure applicator. The consent order is in regard to improper manure application at a site in Cerro Gordo County.

Des Moines County

- M.A., Inc., of Burlington, agreed in a consent order to withdraw an application to renew a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for the operation of the wastewater disposal system at Spring Grove Mobile Home Park in Burlington. The NPDES permit has expired and is no longer in effect.

Emmet County

- Robert Ness, of Estherville, agreed in a consent order to submit and implement a plan of action for the construction of manure containment structures and to pay a \$3,000 penalty. The consent order is in regard to manure from open cattle feedlots in Emmet County entering Twelve Mile Lake.

Franklin County

- Franklin County agreed in a consent order to pay a \$7,500 penalty. The consent order is in regard to open burning and illegal dumping violations in rural Franklin County.

Mitchell County

- L&M Machine, LTD, dba L&M Machine and Construction, and Bob Joens, all of Riceville, agreed in a consent order to pay a \$2,000 penalty. The consent order is in regard to asbestos removal, improper disposal of solid waste and open burning violations that occurred during the demolition of two residences in Riceville.

Plymouth County

- Anthony Trucking, Inc., of LeMars, agreed in a consent order to cease illegal discharge of a wastewater disposal system and to pay a \$5,000 penalty. The consent order is in regard to a truck wash facility in Plymouth County.

Washington County

- The City of Washington agreed in a consent order to work with the DNR regarding the construction of a new gravity sewer line to serve a biodiesel facility and to follow a compliance schedule for improvements to its wastewater collection system, including its treatment facility. The city also agreed to stipulated penalties if the schedule is not followed.

Consent Amendments

A consent amendment is issued in settlement of a previous administrative order or to amend a pre-existing consent order. A consent amendment indicates that the DNR has voluntarily entered into a legally enforceable agreement with the other party.

Clinton County

- Gary Hart, of Clinton, agreed in a consent amendment to remove all solid waste and recyclable metals from a site in Clinton, provide verification of proper disposal, to not store more than 500 waste tires onsite unless he obtains a permit, and to pay a \$1,000 penalty. This amends a 2004 administrative order regarding solid waste and air quality violations.

Writer: Jessie Brown